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MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND GLORIA MOLINA EACH PROPOSE NEW L.A. COUNTY REDISTRICTING PLANS

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Supervisor Gloria Molina each proposed new redistricting plans today, both of which adhere to the spirit and letter of federal civil rights laws and as a result would create two Latino-opportunity voting districts in the County.

"I have maintained from the start of the redistricting process that our top priority as a Board must be to adhere to federal standards, including the Voting Rights Act requirements," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "These requirements were not created abstractly to promote the political dominance of one interest group at the expense of other groups, but to serve all voters fairly. That the maps submitted today by Supervisor Molina and myself result in the creation of Latino-opportunity voting districts is purely a consequence of our commitment to abide by the civil rights laws that undergird our representative democracy and that have made our County better."

“Our new maps simply follow the numbers,” said Sup. Molina. “By doing so, our new maps honor both the letter and the spirit of the Voting Rights Act, which outlaws voting discrimination based on race and serves as the legal foundation of our modern Civil Rights Movement. If approved, either new map will ensure that no minority group’s voting power is unfairly enhanced or diluted at the expense of another. Our new maps simply follow the law and the legal precedent set by the *Garza vs. County of Los Angeles* U.S. Supreme Court case. The *Garza* ruling clearly recognized and acknowledged how generations of disenfranchisement based on race prevented Los Angeles County from achieving the colorblind society we all strive for. We should persist on this righteous path because, in doing so, we propel the spirit of our American Civil Rights Movement into this new century.”

Supervisor Ridley-Thomas’ proposed map, submitted as the “African-American Coalition Map,” moves the eastern San Fernando Valley into the first District, connecting it with downtown Los Angeles and unincorporated East Los Angeles, among other changes, and designates the I-605 corridor portion of the San Gabriel Valley as the Fourth District.

The map also includes a coastal district that runs from Malibu through Long Beach to Cerritos. It also consolidates the central L.A. county community of Florence-Firestone, an unincorporated area currently divided between two supervisorial districts. Since unincorporated areas receive the bulk of their municipal services from the County, uniting Florence-Firestone is of particular importance and will diminish confusion and promote greater governmental accountability.

Supervisor Molina’s proposal, submitted as the “Voting Rights Compliance Map” is similar to the coalition map, leaving the Second and Fifth Supervisorial Districts largely unchanged. However, it proposes dramatic changes elsewhere. The First District would contain the I-605 corridor portion of the San Gabriel Valley and the Third District would stretch from the San Fernando Valley just west of the I-405 through Eagle Rock and downtown Los Angeles as far south as Lynwood and include communities to the west of the I-710.

Every 10 years, the County is legally required to use data from the latest U.S. Census to redraw district boundaries to ensure equitable distribution of population. It must also, however, avoid even unintentional

disenfranchisement of minority voters. The map currently supported by a majority of the Board falls short in this regard: it concentrates Latinos into one district and disperses the rest into four districts, clearly diluting their voting power.

“Three times in 1965, African Americans marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, linking arms to insist that this nation live up to the ideals set forth in the Constitution,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas . “Stalwarts of the Civil Rights movement -- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, Rev. Ralph Abernathy and thousands of marchers faced down the opposition and resistance in their way so that all Americans would have equal voting rights under the law.”

With the introduction of these two maps, the Board will consider at least three proposals: one recommended by its Boundary Review Committee called Plan A-2; Supervisor Molina’s VRA Compliance Map; and the African- American Coalition Map introduced by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas.

To view the maps submitted by the Supervisors as well as those submitted by the public, visit www.redistricting.lacounty.gov and going to the “Boundary Review Committee” tab and selecting the “Submitted Plans” option.

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